



Megiddo Message

DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF CHRIST

The Handiwork of God

Our Assurance of a Future Life

"THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US"

A NEW DAY

SATAN — HIS IDENTITY AND DESTINY

MUSINGS OF THE EDITOR

MEDITATIONS ON THE WORD

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Megiddo Message

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Percy J. Thatcher, Editor

A religious magazine, devoted to the cause of Christ and published for the dissemination of Bible truth alone. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will

- Strengthen your faith in the Bible
- Answer perplexing religious questions
- Give you courage for these uncertain times
- Help you live above the world's moral corruption
- Reveal to you how to develop a character acceptable to God
- Bring peace and stability to your life

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If the MEGIDDO MESSAGE is half as good as the little book, I will have it sent to several that I know who are in need of the Word of God. Send me any free book that you have to spare. If I find them as true as the book that I have just read, I will order them and give them to people who will read them. That is the only way I have of doing anything to carry the Word of God to the people who do not read the Bible.

Metropolis, Ill.

A. W.

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Dear Sister:

We are the happy possessors of the true light that shineth in a dark place, a light that has been tried and proved, holding all the essential elements necessary for a transformation. Once drab surroundings can put on a new look, inspire incentive and give a wholesome desire for righteous living. Of course, the conditions are that if we willingly apply our hearts unto wisdom, we gradually become examples of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith and in purity (I Tim. 4: 12).

South Amboy, N. J.

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We gain a great deal of comfort as well as a new way of thinking from your magazine and would hate to lose an issue of it.

Lincoln, Montana

Mrs. C. G.

THE HANDIWORK OF GOD

A NOTED writer of the 18th century, contemplating the works of the Creator, wrote thus:

"The creation speaketh a universal language, independently of human speech or human language. . . . It is an ever-existing original, which every man can read. It cannot be forged; it cannot be counterfeited; it cannot be lost; it cannot be altered; it cannot be suppressed. It does not depend upon the will of man whether it shall be published or not; it publishes itself from one end of the earth to the other. . . .

"Do we want to contemplate His power? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible whole is governed. Do we want to contemplate His munificence? We see it in the abundance with which He fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate His mercy? We see it in His not withholding that abundance even from the unthankful. . . .

"Everything we behold carries in itself the internal evidence that it did not make itself. Every man is an evidence to himself, that he did not make himself; neither could his father make himself, nor his grandfather . . . and it is the conviction arising from this evidence, that carries us on, as it were, by necessity, to the belief of a first cause eternally existing, of a nature totally differing to any material existence we know of, and by the power of which all things exist. . . ."

Reasoning on this subject one becomes aware that he cannot quarrel with the ideas of this writer. The facts are there if we but have eyes to see. Science has made vast strides in the study of various phases of creation, and while science cannot answer all questions it does furnish us with ample information that points directly to a great First Cause, and thence to the Giver of life. We cannot, of course, all be scientists—naturalists, astronomers, chemists, etc.—but we should be willing to take a little trouble to learn to find our way about in the world in which we live, as we would take the effort to know our city, our profession or hobby. We should be interested at least sufficiently to learn some of the available knowledge about God's handiwork.

CONSIDER THE UNIVERSE

Our minds whirl as we try to picture the vastness of the universe. We live on a planet some 8,000 miles in diameter. This is one of the nine planets that circle the sun; the smallest of which is 3,000 miles in diameter, and the largest 87,000 miles; the one nearest the sun is 36 million miles from it, while the farthest is about four billion miles away.

The sun, whose diameter is 866,000 miles, is one of the average stars which compose the Milky Way Galaxy. The nearest star to our sun is four light years away. (A light year is the distance light travels in a year, approximately 5,880 billion miles.) There are millions of these stars in this galaxy which the astronomers believe to be shaped like a gigantic pin wheel with two or more arms. Its distance across is at least 100,000 light years, its thickness is estimated to be 10,000 light years. Our Solar System is located near its outer edge.

But this is not all!

Outside our galaxy are numerous other galaxies or

island universes; the nearest to us is about 1½ million light years away. Within the range of the 200-inch Hale telescope at Palomar there are probably no fewer than half a billion galaxies. This telescope can "see" across two billion light years of space, and even at that distance galaxies do not thin out.

How much farther do they continue? where do they end? We do not know.

Next to the immensity of the universe, its motion is most fascinating. (1) The earth spins like a top, one revolution per 24 hours. (2) The earth speeds as it circles the sun once a year. (3) The sun speeds as it travels a definite course in the galaxy. (4) The sun speeds as it is whipped around in the rotation of our galaxy, one turn in 200 million years. (5) The galaxy speeds as it moves through space.

In this motion there is precision to the minutest degree. Who can doubt the existence of a Master Mind behind all this! Such creation and order *must* have a *Creator*.

CONSIDER NATURE

All nature bristles with marks of interrogation! The grass and the petals of flowers; the feathers of birds and the hair of mammals; the mountains, the moorlands; the sea, the sky—everywhere, challenging questions arise. Many questions are being answered continually but for every riddle solved others are disclosed.

Much is known about the green leaf or a blade of grass; considerable knowledge is available about the most important chemico-physical process in the world—the photosynthesis that builds up carbon-compounds in the green leaf—but no one has yet achieved a complete analysis of what happens in every green leaf on every sunny day.

When, even briefly, we investigate bird-life, our wonder is ceaseless. Who can tell how a chick is "minted and coined" out of an egg?

Another striking marvel is the migration and homing of birds. How do they return yearly to the exact place of their birth? How do they find their way, though they pass over strange territory, over lakes and oceans, through storms, and with no charts? Their "sense of direction" or "capacity for way-finding" remains an unsolved problem.

Similarly, in the insect and animal worlds the questions yet to be answered are countless.

There are 102 known chemical elements out of which all substances are made. The elements differ one from another only in the number and behavior of their electrons. One is as dazed by the smallness and orderliness inside an atom as he is by the immensity and order of the universe.

Or again, consider the range of difference in the huge wave-lengths used in broadcasting, and those of light we see and the light we do not see, and those of the rays used in radio-therapy, etc., yet all are electro-magnetic radiations traveling at the same velocity of 186,300 miles per second.

The Hand which made and directs all this is Divine!

CONSIDER THE HUMAN BODY

We think of the marvels of the universe, the wonders

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of the mineral, and vegetable kingdoms, but greater than any of these is the human body.

Its 206 bones are more durable than steel. Their joints are tightly enclosed and move in a bath of oil of the body's own production. Its muscles, the moving gear, co-ordinate perfectly; its breather system, with a thermostatic control, is faultless.

The body is made up of an immense number of individual units, microscopic in size, each having a structure of its own, a function of its own, a life of its own. They are so small and numerous that in a drop of blood as large as a small pin head, there are five million of them.

There is no pump so efficient as the human heart, which, in spite of its punishment, stays on the job; there is no pipe line so long as the vessels through which the blood is pumped, of which there are 100,000 miles.

No telegraphic mechanism is equal to the nervous system, no radio compares with its voice or the ear, no camera so wonderful as the eye. The brain surpasses the finest electrical switchboards and computing machines, and the spinal cord sinks the finest Atlantic cable into insignificance.

And further, as with all living things, this marvel of marvels is capable of reproducing its kind. A human egg-cell, fertilized by the sperm-cell, is no larger than the period at the end of this sentence. This egg-cell is the beginning of a new life and within it are contained all the hereditary physical and moral characteristics of both parents. Fathom it if you can! Explain its mysteries if you can! There is but one answer—

This marvel of creation is the product of a Master Mind!

THE CREATOR AND HIS PURPOSE

Nothing is accomplished in our experience unless someone with intelligence directs its accomplishment. So with the universe; so with nature; so with the human body—behind them, fashioning and directing, has stood and still stands the Great Intelligence. It must be there! The human being has intelligence; it is the greatest of all creations. An unintelligent universe could not produce intelligence. The lesser could not produce the greater!

The order and harmony which exist in creation not only force us to acknowledge the existence of a Creator, but also that the Creator has a definite plan in all His works, especially man. The things He has created would be meaningless if they could not be enjoyed by someone.

You ask, and rightly, Can we win the favor of such a great Creator? How and where can we learn about Him? We reply, Your answers can be found only in the Bible. For the Bible contains the thoughts of God. It claims God for its Author and demonstrates it by its very nature, especially the fulfillment of its prophecies. Backed by such a Master Mind the holy men of old who spoke for God did so with the highest authority. Therefore, their words are reliable; we can listen to them with confidence.

We stated that God has a definite plan for His creation. What could seem more out of harmony with the workings of Superior Intelligence and Infinite Wisdom than to create an orderly universe and islands in space as beautiful as our planet and then have no definite purpose?

What, then, is the plan and purpose of the Creator? To His written Word we must go for the answer.

Many centuries ago the Almighty declared: "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. 14: 21). This oath was uttered during a crisis with His people, and though many years have passed, and crisis after crisis appears, still the promise stands. His "glory" which shall fill the earth is His people Israel (Isa. 46: 13), more rightly defined as the "true soldiers of God," taken out of every race and people, respected only for their character.

Isaiah, a prominent spokesman for God, wrote thus: "For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, *he formed it to be inhabited*" (45: 17, 18). The earth is inhabited today, it is true, too densely in some places, but there is more to this promise. The same prophet declared, "Thy people shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever" (ch. 60: 21).

That is the beauty of creation. The people who shall eventually inhabit the earth shall be *all righteous* and they shall dwell *for ever*. In that time violence and wasting and destruction shall no more be in the land. People shall learn the law of the Lord and shall dwell in peace (Isa. 60: 18; 2: 2—4).

Should we look for men alone to establish that peaceful state on earth we would look in vain. But the hope of the world lies with Christ, the future King. When He returns, as the promise is recorded (Acts 1: 10, 11; John 14: 3), He will establish His reign over the whole earth and of His Kingdom there shall be no end (Dan. 2: 44). This is the age to which all the patriarchs and prophets looked; it is the age they foresaw a long way off, but now we see it near at hand. For when Christ the King returns and conquers the forces of evil (Rev. 19: 11—21), the knowledge of the Lord will spread until all men will know and serve Him, and live at peace with each other. With death in the past (I Cor. 15: 53, 54) and the earth transformed into a paradise of delights (Isa. 35: 1) the oath of the Almighty shall at last be fulfilled. The glory of the Lord shall indeed fill the earth.

But our earth is only one small member of myriads of worlds on which the will of the Lord is being done (Matt. 6: 10; Eph. 3: 14, 15). His plan is a continuing process which extends through the entire universe and everywhere His handiwork is visible.

Shall we be satisfied to absorb ourselves in the marvels of creation, and at the same time ignore their Creator, that Superior Intelligence to which all creation bears immutable evidence? Shall we live and die as the insect, when God has promised that "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings [power] as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isa. 40: 31)? God forbid! When, by keeping His holy law, we shall have developed a character worthy of perpetuation, we shall be rewarded with endless life; for when life is made perfect it becomes perpetual. "Universal life is the object of creation."

Would you be a partaker in the glories of an endless existence on this earth annexed to heaven? Would you fathom the mysteries of creation which baffle scientists? Would you contemplate with your own eyes the splendors of those other worlds and soar to them?

Then "seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion. The Lord is his name."

Our Assurance of a Future Life

FROM the earliest records of the human race we learn that man has had some theory of a life beyond death.

This conviction has been widespread, more so, it is reported, than a belief in a god or no gods. Men have had difficulty in reconciling themselves to any theory involving their own ultimate extinction.

The desire to live beyond existed in the American Indian, who had his hunting equipment buried with him so that he could use it in the happy hunting grounds to which he expected to go. It existed among the early Sumerians and Scythians, whose kings, upon their decease, had by pre-arrangement many of their servants and domestic animals killed and sealed in the vast tombs in which they were laid, so that they might have their services in the life beyond in which they expected to reign. Many and varied have been and are the other beliefs of the life beyond. Today, in our civilized world, excepting the atheistic societies, the belief in immortality exists to a greater or lesser degree. Somewhere, somehow, man expects to live on.

But while the belief in immortality exists, comparatively few people have any definite convictions concerning the nature of the future life. By far the greater majority are only nominally believers in a hereafter. They are unable to make a defense to anyone who calls them to account for the hope they possess. There are not a few men and women who have no desire to know. But there are people who, while possessing no definite convictions of a life hereafter, nevertheless, desire an explanation, and something concrete on which to base their hope. It is to such men and women as these who, like ourselves, are dissatisfied and ill at ease without a certainty of belief, that we address these thoughts.

OUR HOPE

The foremost ground of the Christian's hope of the future life is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The first disciples were not unmindful of the many prophetic utterances concerning the resurrection and a life hereafter. One incident that fully confirms this point is Martha's statement to Jesus when her brother was dead. Jesus had said to her, "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha understood there would be a Resurrection Day in the future and replied, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11: 23, 24). But the rising of their Master from the grave was the event that revived in them that lively hope of the resurrection from the dead. Jesus had overcome death; He could not be holden by it; He was living in the power of an endless life; and by His rising again He confirmed positively the words He had spoken to them, "because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14: 19). They saw in the resurrection of Jesus the guarantee of their own future life.

Paul cried out: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (I Cor. 15: 20).

Again, "God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. . . . If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (I Cor. 6: 14; 15: 14).

And again, "If we have grown into him by a death like his, we shall grow into him by a resurrection like his" (Rom. 6: 5, Moffatt).

When Jesus was on earth He had raised Lazarus from the dead. Lazarus had been dead for four days, yet Jesus had the power to bring him back to life. In view of such power it is not difficult for us to accept His words concerning the future resurrection. He said on one occasion, "The hour is coming . . . when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. . . . Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves, shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5: 25, 28, 29).

He who when on earth had the power to raise the dead, and He who was Himself dead, but arose and was seen and handled by His closest followers and later seen by about 500 brethren, and is now alive forevermore, certainly can keep this promise. We need have no fear concerning its fulfillment; we can believe it in full faith.

THE PROPHETS' HOPE OF RESURRECTION AND LIFE

It is inevitably true, that when we believe in a resurrection from the dead and a future life, we come in agreement with the thoughts and beliefs of the men of old. Those patriarchs and prophets who had faith in God had also definite convictions of life hereafter. They were not in the dark; they expressed their hopes in writing for ages to come. What a blessing to have their recorded thoughts!

Listen to Job: "If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee" (14: 14, 15). The question confronted Job as it does us: "If a man die, shall he live again?" But he understood there would be a period of waiting before that life could be enjoyed. Hence he said further, "If I wait, the grave is mine house . . . I know that thou wilt bring me to death, to the house appointed for all living" (17: 13; 30: 23).

Mortality ends this brief span, but Job voiced a hope and a marching song for all believers and for all time: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (ch. 19: 25—27).

He knew that death would claim him, yet after moldering in the dust, he would be brought forth at the Resurrection by the mighty power of God.

The Psalmist testified to the fact that there is a future life when he cried, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Ps. 17: 15).

And again, "God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave" (Ps. 49: 15).

The Prophet Isaiah had the same glorious hope: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: . . . the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isa. 26: 19).

And so did Daniel: "At that time shall Michael [Christ, the Chief One] stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people . . . and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found

written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake" (12:1, 2).

Life in its fullness will be realized when the Prophet Hosea's prophecy is fulfilled (13:14). "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction!"

The physical resurrection, while often derided, is in harmony with logic and science. For matter is not lost, even though it be disarranged; and He who created us in the beginning can re-create us as living bodies, capable of motion, thought and memory.

FUTURE LIFE — CONDITIONAL

Contrary to the nominally accepted belief in inherent immortality, we believe, and the Bible fully supports our belief, that immortality or the future life is *conditional*. Man in his natural state is mortal. There is nothing immortal about him. We read in Job 4:17, "Shall mortal man be more just than God?"

The Preacher said (Eccl. 9:5), "the dead know not anything," and the Psalmist stated clearly that thought does not survive the body. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish" (146:4; also 115:17). Even the soul is said to be dying: "The soul that sinneth it shall die" (Ezek. 18:20). The word "soul" as used by the sacred writers means, "A living creature, an individual, a person, life, living, also applied to beasts." We do not have souls; we are souls. When the breath leaves the body all existence ceases until the resurrection of the body.

Immortality must be sought for "by patient continuance in well doing" (Rom. 2:7). God gives humanity this life as a proving ground. Those who prove worthy are granted the gift of eternal life, but those who do not, receive their wages—death (Rom. 6:23). This is the only hope offered to men by the revealed will of God. Those who do not choose to seek for the future life, those who are content with the fruits of their mortal effort here and now are granted this life and whatever good they can get out of it. What they make of it is their only reward.

But those men and women who rise above the level of carnal, human thought, and live the life God prescribes, who not only *desire* immortality, but *work* for it, to them God has promised a glorious, pain-free eternal life, continually to grow in knowledge and power. They have the promise of being made like the angels (Luke 20:36). They—or we, if faithful—can become a part of the power which controls the universe, which designs the marvels of nature and directs the development of His highest creation.

In our present state of development much is a mystery, but when our hope of eternal life is fully realized we shall then understand the details of its various phases and enjoy the benefits of creation eternally.

This assurance of eternal life, strengthened by the resurrection of Jesus, was the fuel which kept alive and active the courage and faith of all early believers. It was the force which enabled the martyrs to face the dungeon, the arena, the stake. And it is the power which today causes others to toil and sacrifice and forego the world's good that they might win the "things which are not seen."

Will this hope be yours?

"THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US"

THE ALMIGHTY CREATOR of the universe has manifested infinite wisdom in the planning and designing of all His works. Of all the wonders of creation, the greatest is in evidence on glorified worlds. There He has been able to develop inhabitants so good, so loyal, so dependable, so wise and kind that nothing disturbs the peace and order, happiness and love that rules His beautiful home. The Almighty devotes great care and attention to this part of His creation.

The world, we know, is the result of an eternity of wisdom and experience. The Father has found that the very best material can be developed only under trial. He has given to the sons of men this beautiful planet, complete with every blessing and resource; He has bestowed His greatest treasure, the Bible, upon us. This is His plan, His Word, His Truth. He has blessed us with the promise of eternal life. He has placed us here in this world, under these conditions, you and me, each possessing the promise. He has stipulated the manner of life which will merit His approval in the final day of account. But "the world is too much with us."

The plan of the Almighty is a positive thing; it is clean and high, sure and eternal. But we creatures of today are of limited capacity and perception. So shortsighted are we, so saturated with human weaknesses, that it seems almost impossible to lift our eyes above the passing moment to catch a glimpse of the beautiful light that really shines.

This is the great difference between the people of the world and the true Christian. The Christian looks ahead to the end of the matter. The world lives from day to day, content with it alone. In this tendency to be all absorbed with the present, "the world is too much with us."

In this age of technical advance, new equipment is continually being poured upon the market, new devices to lighten labor. These can be a blessing if the energy and time they save us is used wisely, but the fascination with the device itself can easily take precedence. The world, especially America, is becoming so worshipful of its equipment that life has become a terrific tempo of work and wages in a mad rush to obtain its new "necessities." The real values of life are lost. The ideal man of this age is warm but not hasty, ardent and full of definite power but not running about to be pleased and deceived by every new thing. In this, too, "the world is too much with us."

The world today is passing through a stage that might well be described as one of great paradox. It has unparalleled blessings and advantages but the outstanding characteristics are of instability and insecurity. The fears and frustrations of today's world would make a treatise in themselves. The result of these conditions is an unwholesome attitude of indifference. This irresponsibility can be seen and felt throughout the world from the upper levels to the day laborer. It is a kind of social disease that numbs many a virtuous effort to a mediocre performance. Saddest of all aspects would be to see this slow, malignant spread of doubt and fear invading the rank of believers. The age *does* hinder. Its

maze of interests can easily distract us. When we would plan our decisions, determine our duty, clarify our ideals, we are met with great difficulty for we live amidst confused affairs and shifting standards. But let us mark this observation well, that if these things trouble us, if we fear their fear, we have lost our vision. We have forgotten the glad tidings. "The world is too much with us."

But there is a God in Israel today whose Word still stands and who will deliver. He will send His angels to gather all who remember. Let us trim our lamps lest the world be too much with us and we stumble and fall even as they.

A NEW DAY

Lo, here hath dawned another blue day!
Think, wilt thou let it slip useless away?
Out of eternity this new day is born;
Into eternity at night will return.
Behold it aforesome no eye ever did;
So soon it forever from all eyes is hid.
Here hath been dawning another blue day;
Think, wilt thou let it slip useless away?

OUR heavenly Father was very careful about the way He bestowed the blessing of time upon us. He gave us time, moment by moment. Time is a wonderful gift. God values it highly. He knew that it would not be easy for us to use time wisely unless it was portioned out to us in small quantities. Then, too, God has shown in the gift of time a great equality. Each person in all the world has time measured to him a moment at a time. No one receives many minutes at once, while another receives only a few. The busiest person in all the world must use time a moment at a time. The idle person can waste only a moment at a time. What a responsibility this places on each of us!

Day by day we are going somewhere, either forward or backward. We are either redeeming the time or letting it slip uselessly away, because, after all, a person is not like a revolving door, ever moving but going nowhere. Too many lives are lived aimlessly, and in their aimlessness the days, weeks and months slip uselessly away, but this must not be the case with us. We must start each day with renewed determination to be more and more like Jesus and say as did one steadfast soul, "This one thing I do." Christ did not want ours to be a hit-and-miss service, for He declared, "If any man wants to follow in my footsteps, he must give up all right to himself, carry his cross every day and keep close behind me" (Luke 9: 23, Phillips). We find no counter interest here, but a daily response in energetic service. There is no quick, easy or lazy way out for anyone, for each new day brings its weight of care to test the fiber.

This is a new day. God has given us this day to use as we will. We can waste it or use it; we can make it a day long to be remembered for its beauty, joy, and achievement or it can be a day filled with pettiness, but God forbid that we should let it slip uselessly away. What we do with today is of the utmost importance for we are *trading* or *exchanging* a day of our life for it. When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever but it shall hold

something we have traded for it. If sensible, we will want it to be gain, not loss; good, not evil; a shining success, not a dismal failure. We can rest assured this new day will not have slipped uselessly away if we keep the religion we practice at the altar of God on Sunday with us at the washtub on Monday and every day of the week.

Today we can make someone happier by not airing our petty grievances and complaints on their longsuffering ears. Someone will be treasuring up kind, helpful words that came from our lips today; a wayfarer will have been led uphill, not down, because today we radiated the sunshine of truth wherever we went, in action as well as word. Faces today will brighten for our coming, and hearts will be lighter if we have used today wisely.

God will not expect more of us than we are capable of giving, but we must live up to our best. "Naught else is worthy His love." Each new day in numberless ways we are forming characters that will witness either for or against us. Through all the hours of this new day moments of temptation will creep in, but we must not yield. Today there will come times of tension, but we must not speak or act rashly or impulsively. Yes, today is a day of great opportunities and we must be ready to take advantage of them all, for there, on the pages of the Book will be recorded the deeds of *this very day*, and how happy we shall be if the good outweighs the bad and we are worthy to be welcomed into the age of eternal things.

May the strength of our divine hope be sufficient for whatsoever responsibilities this day may bring; and when day has at last donned its star-studded cloak of night, may we look back without regret and forward with radiant spirit and thankful heart.

For soon will be dawning another blue day
Think, wilt thou let it slip useless away?

YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

There are two days in every week about which we should not worry, two days which should be kept free from fear and apprehension.

One of these days is YESTERDAY with its mistakes and cares, its faults and burdens, its aches and pains. YESTERDAY has passed forever beyond our control.

All the money in the world cannot bring back YES-TERDAY. We cannot undo a single act we performed; we cannot erase a single word we said. YESTERDAY is gone.

The other day we should not worry about is TOMORROW with its impossible adversities, its burdens, its large promise and poor performance. TOMORROW is also beyond our immediate control.

TOMORROW'S sun will rise, either in splendor or behind a mask of clouds—but it will rise. Until it does, we have no stake in TOMORROW, for it is as yet unborn.

This leaves only one day—TODAY. Any man can fight the battles of just one day. It is only when you and I add the burdens of those two awful eternities—YESTERDAY and TOMORROW—that we break down.

It is not the experience of TODAY that drives men mad—it is remorse or bitterness for something which happened YESTERDAY and the dread of what TOMORROW may bring.

Let us, therefore, live but one day at a time.

Satan — His Identity and Destiny

WHEN the seventy returned to Jerusalem with reports of their missionary success, Christ said, in a swift flight of exultation, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Was He speaking of the past, present, or future? Was His statement historic or prophetic?

The above mentioned text (Lu. 10: 18) has been quoted in support of the notion that Jesus Christ, in His pre-earthly existence, was an eye-witness of the Miltonian civil war in heaven and the violent expulsion of Lucifer, the leader of the rebellion. The suggestion raises some difficult questions. What was he doing there? How did a devil get into heaven in the first place? Quite simple, was the reply. He was not always a devil, but a bright angel, the heavenly choirmaster, to be exact. He had all the honors an angel could ask for, but he wanted more—to the everlasting sorrow of our planet, where the outcast made a forced landing.

If this be true, then we may conclude that heaven's "screening" process is something less than perfect. And if there is nothing new in the plan of God, then the same sort of thing has been going on in the universe from eternity past and will continue to eternity future, Eternal Wisdom gaining nothing by experience.

So literal an approach involves us in no end of difficulties and absurdities, and is in line with Luther's famous dictum, "I reject reason; I reject mathematical proofs...."

To understand this saying of Jesus, we must first understand whom He is talking about. Who is Satan? It is very certain that he is no angel, and never was, for the angels of God can never die (Luke 20: 36), while Satan, we are assured, is marked for eventual destruction in the "lake of fire, . . . which is the second death" (Rev. 20: 9, 10, 14; 21: 8). If God's glorified heaven is not safe from treason and war and death, then nothing is.

Throughout the Old and New Testaments, Satan, or the devil, is used as a symbolic or inclusive term, to denote sin and all sinners, any adversary to God. It is employed in surprising ways. As godly an individual as the Apostle Peter was rebuked with the words, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offense unto me" (Matthew 16: 23).

This "Satan" has never been in heaven—God's heaven—nor will he ever be. But in the social and political heavens of our troubled *kosmos*, he rides high and rules with a high hand. He is fittingly termed "that old serpent" (Rev. 20: 2); he is as old as the human race. The Apostle Paul, employing the characteristic Hebrew symbolism, terms the collective powers of evil "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2: 2), which spirit, we are informed by James and by the Master Himself, is nothing but the lusts and evil desires which come out of the human heart or mind (James 1: 13—15; Mark 7: 21—23). Given expression, these lusts are the cause of all the trouble, both political and personal, in the world.

It is definitely certain that Jesus did not refer to some event of His pre-existence, for, in the first place, He did not pre-exist. He was not a God incarnate, but a man, "made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4: 4), and He had no existence before the woman of whom He was made. His Divine paternity did not affect His human nature in any way (Hebrews 2: 17). Secondly, as we have said, Satan, as commonly understood or even as a spiritual prototype, was never in the heaven of the immortals.

Neither could it have been an event of Jesus' own day and age, for His career made no perceptible difference in His own generation. If Satan has fallen from heaven at any subsequent time, he has certainly made a remark-

able come-back, if we may judge by the present condition of society.

So much, then, for the negative side—what our Lord did *not* mean. But what did He mean? The circumstances surrounding the utterance may shed some light on the question. The public ministry of Jesus was at its full tide. The work had outgrown the original band of twelve, so "after these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them . . . into every city and place whither he himself would come" (Luke 10: 1). Miraculous power was provided, sufficient to confirm the Word. To humble men, who had known only the humdrum round of daily existence, this was a new and inspiring experience. The sick were healed, the lepers cleansed, sight restored to the blind, speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf. Small wonder that they "returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name" (verse 17).

A knowledge of the plan of God and a study of these circumstances convince us that Jesus' reply was not a statement of history but a prophecy. He was a mighty Prophet (Deut. 18: 18), and could see far into the future. To what extent He understood the details of the establishment of His future Kingdom we do not know, but it is quite certain that He knew far more than His closest followers were able to receive. Understanding the broad outlines, they could wait for details until His ascension and the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. We may therefore conclude that when He said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven," His disciples understood His meaning perfectly.

Jesus' reply was, in effect, "So far, so good. But this is not the real thing. The power you have experienced is but a foretaste, a faint shadow of that which is to come. When the Son of man returns in His glory and His Kingdom fills the earth, Satan will be challenged not only on the fringes of his domain, but will be cast out of power completely. Rejoice not so much in your present ability, thrilling though it may be, as in the fact that your names are written in heaven (v. 20); that you may be a part of that glorified number of kings and priests who shall bring this same power of God to bear to banish all evil from the earth. This is the greater victory, the supreme goal, of which you must never lose sight."

Satan's fall from heaven will not be to immediate destruction, but into the close confinement of the "bottomless pit" for a thousand years (Rev. 20: 1, 2). Under a stern and unbreakable law, all evil will be repressed and shut up in the hearts of the minority who submit to the new order, but with imperfect motives. No open manifestation of rebellion will be tolerated; the chain is strong. Under such circumstances the human race will learn to mend its ways and to love the better things of life.

At the end of the Millennium comes a final test period, with "Satan" released briefly (Rev. 20: 7, 8), but he never gets back into the heaven he once ruled so arrogantly. The Second Judgment consigns him forever to the second death, utter oblivion.

Satan's fall will truly be "as lightning," not necessarily as a symbol of speed, although forty years (Micah 7: 15, 16) is a very short time in which to dislodge the accumulated evils of some millions of years of human existence. The change will be sudden enough, but like the Second Coming, which is also compared to lightning (Matt. 24: 27), it will come with destructive violence and complete visibility. When Satan falls, it will not be done in a corner, but the whole world shall know.

Musings of the Editor

"ALAS, who shall live when God doeth this?" A more heart-searching question cannot be found within the pages of Holy Writ. It reaches down to the time when God's judgments have passed and the tares, chaff, and stubble are swept away. It is the season when He shall come down like rain upon the new mown grass; the day when the righteous shall flourish and peace shall bathe the world from pole to pole. "His dominion shall extend from sea to sea." Ah! but who shall "abide the day of His coming? . . . who shall stand when He appeareth? . . . Who shall live when God doeth this?"

Who Shall Live? Do we fully grasp the sacred obligations that have devolved upon this generation that will live to see the Son of Man coming in all

His glory; that has seen the barked and peeled fig tree bear again her fruit and shoot forth her leaves; this generation that has seen Rome confounded in all her errors; that has been called to a sanctified fast and gathered to a solemn assembly; that has heard the trumpet blown in Zion to wake, to arouse, to prepare for that great and notable day when God shall arise to shake terribly the kingdoms of men?

When the mariner has been tossed for many days in thick weather on an unknown sea, he naturally avails himself of the first pause in the storm, the earliest glance at the sun, to take his latitude and ascertain how far the elements have driven him from his true course. Let us imitate this prudence and before we float farther on the mighty billows of the sea of nations, let us ask ourselves the question, "Where am I now? Am I near the rocks, or is my storm-tossed bark drifting far from the channel, away from the 'blessed lights of home'?"

If thou wouldest live, O Israel, in the day when mercy and truth meet together, then hasten and prepare to meet thy God. If thou wouldest live, "let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder well the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil." Hearken, O daughter of Zion, and consider. Have you the same vehement desire that you formerly had to go on to perfection? Is the giddy, rushing world around you, by its indifference and unbelief, causing you to slacken your pace, destroying your hunger and thirst for righteousness? At the banquet God has prepared, is your relish for the heavenly food changing? Do you crave the flesh more than the manna which is falling all around you? Have you every day and hour an uninterrupted sense of "Christ in you the hope of glory"? Do you sit "in heavenly places"?

If you would live, then forget not the path your Master trod; turn not aside to forbidden ways. Do you think it has been said in vain, If we die with Christ, we shall also live with Him? Our triumph is prepared, and yet we often do all we can to shun the combat. Is it because we are fearful of a giant? or is there a lion in the way? If we would live, let us ask ourselves today, "Are we dealing squarely with God? Are we afraid to work a little overtime in His service to catch up with much we have lost by serving self?"

Perhaps a good question to ask self, if we would live, is not, Where do I stand? but, In what direction am I traveling? Be certain, fellow traveler, that you are headed toward the sun's rising, and press forward with mighty power to greet the new day.

A Moment in the Morning

A moment in the morning, ere the cares of day begin, Ere the heart's wide door is open for the world to enter in, Ah, then, alone with Jesus, in the silence of the morn, In heavenly sweet communion, let your duty-day be born. In the quietude that blesses with a prelude of repose Let your soul be smoothed and softened, as the dew re-vives the rose.

A moment in the morning take your Bible in your hand, And catch a glimpse of glory from the peaceful promised land:

It will linger still before you when you seek the busy mart, And like flowers of hope will blossom into beauty in your heart.

The precious words, like jewels, will glisten all the day With a rare effulgent glory that will brighten all the way; When comes a sore temptation, and your feet are near a snare,

Hold them fast within your memory, and make each one prayer.

A moment in the morning—a moment, if no more— Is better than an hour when the trying day is o'er. 'Tis the gentle dew from heaven, the manna for the day; If you fail to gather early—alas! it melts away. So, in the blush of morning, take the blessed words of love, And walk in Jesus' pathway and the peacefulness thereof.

—Selected and altered.

THE PRICE OF SUCCESS

How little can we tell, how little we know the brain-fatigue, the heart-labor, the conscience-struggle which it cost to make a David, a Paul, and a Peter; how many days of toil, how many nights of weariness, how many months and years of vigilant, powerful effort were spent to perfect in them what we bow down to in reverence! Their words have power, their names a charm, and their deeds a glory. How came this wealth of soul to be theirs? Why does childhood lisp of them in reverence, and age feel a thrill of pleasure when they are mentioned?

They were sons of eternity who understood that toil is the price of success, that achievement comes only through unremitting industry. They were once as weak and helpless as any of us; once as destitute of wisdom, virtue, and power as an infant. These overcomers owe more to their perseverance than to their natural powers, their friends, or the favorable circumstances around them.

Can we stand by, seeing and knowing these things about examples so great, and not follow in their steps?

"He that winneth souls is wise." —Proverbs 11: 30.

We are not here to be served but to serve others.
—John 21: 15—17.

Meditations

On the Word

"He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak. . . . Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshipeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto" (Isa. 44: 14, 15).

The man in our scripture text had cut down a tree. He cut it up into proper lengths for firewood, and with it built a fire which served two purposes: he warmed himself and cooked his food. The fire added much to his comfort and satisfaction. But there was a piece left over, and out of this piece he made a god.

Although this incident was descriptive of life in Old Testament times, yet we find millions of people of this type today. Their religion consists of giving to God what is left after their personal wants, comforts and ambitions have been satisfied and cared for.

Some time ago a theater in our city was advertising a double feature, "Suez Preferred," and "Heaven Can Wait." How expressive of the mind and attitude of the masses, too often including ourselves.

The divine command is, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6: 33). God does not condemn our working to make an honest living and to obtain the comforts of life. Much to the contrary, the rule, *If any man will not work, neither shall he eat*, tacitly approves the principle of working. "Owe no man anything, but to love one another," is another rule demanding thrift. A poor man can hardly pay his debts unless he is gainfully employed. And again: "Be diligent in business." If we fail to be conscientious, careful and orderly about our everyday duties, a weakness which all can see, how could we be depended upon to be diligent in our spiritual work?

God merely wanted to impress upon our mind the necessity of placing things of eternal value, duration and satisfaction, above and before those that have such short-lived value. Many of Jesus' teachings illustrate the idea that he who prefers the things of earth to the things of the Kingdom is not worthy of a place in it.

The God-given principle is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Anything we place above God in our affections constitutes a god, or an idol. And to further impress the point, God caused to be recorded for our learning the incident of the wealthy man who came to Jesus, eagerly asking, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" (Matt. 19: 16). In answering, Jesus made him a proposition and outlined the conditions. Because he had great wealth he went away sorrowful. He preferred "Suez." Heaven could wait while he took his fill of wealth and pride.

Then there is Jesus' parable of the farmer whose fields brought forth abundantly. He planned to build new barns in which to store his bumper crop; he thought that by laying up for himself treasures on earth he had peace and security for many days to come. Like the man in our

text, he became satisfied to eat, drink, and be merry; heaven could wait. But that night his soul was required of him.

In still another of Jesus' parables many of those invited to "the feast" began to make excuses, preferring their own little programs of life. Heaven could wait.

Our efforts, if successful in our chosen field of endeavor, will supply us with the necessary food, clothing, and comforts of life, but it is when we make the seeking of these things an end in and of themselves that they become our idols. In this temporal life the people who have made a name for themselves, amassed a fortune, or gained a place for themselves among the dignitaries of earth, in many cases had first to undergo years of self-denial, privation, and even suffering. They counted these things but light in the face of success. So we, as heirs of the Kingdom, must be willing to undergo the discipline, endure the suffering and self-denial necessary to obtain such an exalted position.

Then there is the familiar story of Martha and Mary. Martha no doubt had every intention of sitting at the feet of Jesus when her temporal duties had been taken care of to her satisfaction, but Jesus reproved her for letting the golden opportunity of hearing the word of God slip by, for giving more time and thought than was necessary to the temporal, thereby giving things of eternal value a secondary place in her affections.

How easy and natural it is to let the hours slip by without giving the proper amount of attention to reading, meditation and prayer. By the time the needs and cares of the pressing present have been duly taken care of, unless we put forth a special effort, little time, energy, talents, or means will be left over for the Lord's work.

The 20th verse of the chapter from which our meditation text is taken appropriately expresses the condition of the man whose heart is set on securing the perishable things of earth: "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

When Christ the great Judge sits as a "refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap," every man's work will be tried, to determine whether it be hay, stubble or wood, which things are perishable; or whether it be gold, silver, or precious stones, the brilliance and beauty of which are only heightened by the purifying action of the fire. When the test is passed, all that will remain of the things which now seem so important, will be the cold ashes of earthly hopes and pleasures.

The first and greatest commandment is that we should love the Lord with all our mind, might and strength. If we truly love a person we leave no stone unturned to please him; his wants and wishes are the ruling factor in all we do and say. So it will be if our love for God is sincere; our every word and action will be to please Him alone. So if we want God to hearken and deliver us early when we cry, we must be early to seek Him now and do His will. Heaven cannot wait.

When you light the gas you put out the candles; when you turn on the electricity you turn off the gas; when the sun arises you shut off the electricity; so, when Christ the Truth arises on your soul, all other lights are extinguished and forgotten.

Your Questions Answered



BIBLICAL

PERSONAL

CURRENT

Do you have a question? Personal replies to Biblical questions will be sent to any correspondent, and counsel will be offered on problems pertaining to the spiritual life. The MEGIDDO MESSAGE will publish only the most helpful discussions for the benefit of other readers. No names shall be mentioned.

Is the New Testament sufficient for one's salvation?

There is no question that if an individual kept all the commandments contained in the New Testament he would be assured salvation. We may go further and state with Paul: "Love is the fulfilling of the law," and if one observed this single rule perfectly (for love is extremely far-reaching) he could be saved.

But the Apostle Paul said that the things which were written aforetime were written for our learning (Rom. 15: 4), and also that we are built upon the foundation of the prophets, apostles and Jesus Himself being the chief corner stone (Eph. 2: 20). Much of the teaching of the prophets is essential knowledge. The Old Testament contains countless exhortations to godly living. And the history of God's dealing with His people, Israel, provides not only a fascinating study but also the historic background of our faith. It furnishes many examples of holiness for us to copy, also poor examples, by whose mistakes we can profit. We consider the Old Testament a priceless heritage.

Is it possible for a murderer to gain eternal life?

The Apostle Paul mentions "murders" as one of the works of the flesh (Galatians 5: 19—21). They that do such things shall *not* inherit the Kingdom of God. Also in Rev. 22: 15 we read that murderers are among those who are outside the city of God. He who dies with the stain of blood on his hands has no promise of salvation. But while life lasts there is hope to repent of the greatest transgression, including murder (see Isa. 1: 16—18). This in no way means that a murderer crying for mercy at the last moment of life, just before his execution, has assurance of pardon and life. But if his life is spared and he repents of his sin, wholly and sincerely and in truth performs works of righteousness, then there is hope, and God who knows and judges the secrets of the hearts shall reward him accordingly. Ezekiel 18 discusses the point fully. If a wicked man turn from his wickedness (any wickedness) and does that which is right he shall live thereby.

Does the Bible speak about the atomic bomb?

The Bible does state clearly that in the latter days there shall be a vast production of military weapons, but it does not specify the nature of the weapons. The atomic bombs are not mentioned. Strangely, the would-be Bible expositors who state that the A-bomb was foretold never taught or predicted such mighty weapons until *after* the powerful bombs were developed.

Do you consider it right to use musical instruments in church during worship or otherwise?

We certainly do! The Psalms abound with commands to praise the Lord with instruments, and it also says to play "skillfully" (Ps. 33: 3). Advocates of "no musical instruments" state that no instruments are mentioned in New Testament times. True enough, but the conditions of the infant church were such that instruments could have been a hindrance, especially if they had to flee for their lives, or, the sound of music would reveal

their secret hiding places. However, they never condemned the use of musical instruments, but as with everything else, it must be done to the glory of God (I Cor. 10: 31).

Will Christ personally return or did He just turn His attention to this earth as the Jehovah's Witnesses teach?

When the angels took Jesus away to heaven their promise was, "This same Jesus shall so come in *like manner* as ye have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1: 10, 11). The apostles witnessed His personal disappearance. It was not just that He turned His attention to heaven, so to return in the same manner He must return *personally*. Furthermore, we are told that when the day of the Lord comes His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14: 4). When His feet stand there He will be there in person, not just His attention turned this way.

Some teach that Christ delivers the Kingdom over to God at the end of the one thousand years, using I Cor. 15: 24; but how can that be harmonized with Rev. 11: 15, that Christ will reign forever and ever?

Not only Rev. 22: 5 but other Scriptures plainly teach the reign of Christ and the saints is forever (Dan. 7: 18, 27; Luke 1: 33). The Kingdom is delivered over to God in the sense of being glorified like other planets, another world completed like hundreds and millions in the universe. Christ and the saints do not pass the Kingdom over to the Father and then get out, for the kings and subjects are earth's eternal inhabitants (Ps. 37: 29). At the end of the thousand years, this earth beautified and glorified and filled with immortal beings as described in Isaiah 35 and Daniel 12: 3, will be added to God's heavenly family according to His eternal purpose.

Please explain I John 5: 16; there is a sin unto death and a sin not unto death. What is the distinction?

The death referred to is not natural but penal, a death pronounced by Christ, the Judge. All die naturally but if we do not overcome sin it brings not natural death but penal. The sin that is not unto death is one that is forgiven. Any sin that is confessed and forsaken can be forgiven, no matter if it is as scarlet (Isa. 1: 16—18). The only sin that will be unpardonable is the sin that is not forsaken.

Of course, there was the age when they had Holy Spirit power and they had tasted of the powers of the world to come. If one to whom that power had been imparted turned his back on the truth and crucified the Son of God afresh, there was no chance for him to receive pardon.

What is the Kingdom of heaven? is it the same as the Kingdom of God?

The two terms are synonymous and are used interchangeably. The expression "Kingdom of God" appears some 65 times in the New Testament, while the "Kingdom of heaven," appears only about 28 times. The Kingdom of God is often called the Kingdom of heaven because Christ, the future King of earth shall come from heaven; also the power to subdue the earth and correct its countless ills, comes from heaven. Further, when the reign of Christ is fully established, God's will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven. Earth will then become a part of heaven.

Search the

Scriptures

The Word of God is plain indeed
To all who will His bidding heed,
Who long His holy law to keep,
And thus be numbered with His sheep.

'Tis not all on the surface, true,
But we are told just what to do:
We must search as for nuggets rare,¹
And always "like with like" compare.²

Rich allegories we shall find,
And parables that enrich the mind;
And while some things are literal,
The greater share is spiritual.

So we must study to divide,³
And keep each on its proper side;
For here the wise of this world fall,
Not learning to divide at all.

The first three chapters of the Book
They literalize, and overlook
The lovely gems of Truth that lie
So close at hand; they pass them by.

They say six thousand years ago
God made our world, and all we know,
In six days; quite a feat, indeed,
If true; with this we are agreed.

They think that ere the sun had shone
Green grass upon the earth was known;
That man was in God's image made;
They greatly err, we are afraid.

They know not of the world to come,
The wondrous New Jerusalem,
Which is in Genesis revealed
To those whose eyes have not been sealed.

1. Prov. 2:1—5
2. I Cor. 2:13
3. II Tim. 2:15
4. Isa. 40:6
5. Mal. 4:2

The Scriptures say that "men" are "grass,"⁴
They perish, and are gone. Alas!
But they were here, we must confess,
Before the Sun of righteousness.⁵

And He who would God's image bear
Must first a character prepare⁶
Worthy to be accepted when
The earth is filled with righteous men.⁷

The "lawyers" of today believe
That Adam, and his helpmeet, Eve,
Were first of all the humankind,
Although in Holy Writ we find

God's mercy, from all ages past,
To all eternity shall last;⁸
And this could not be true, were there
No one with whom His love to share.

They also think that Adam's sin
Is handed down upon his kin,
Who are condemned eternally,
Unless "Another" sets them free.

What saith the Lord? "No one shall be
Punished for some iniquity
By others done; though low or high,
The soul that sinneth, *it* shall die."⁹

Thus we must use the greatest care
To "search the Scriptures" here and there;¹⁰
And use each rule that God provides
For those who in His Truth abide.

Study to show thyself approved,
And do not be ashamed, or moved,
When Jesus comes, to want to hide,
But properly the Word divide.

6. II Cor. 7:1
7. Isa. 60:21
8. Ps. 103:17, 18
9. Ezek. 33:18, 19
10. Isa. 28:10

